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BOGUS SOLDIER PLEADS GUILTY



Franck Gervais covered up during his walk to the Ottawa courthouse on Wednesday. Gervais was seen on TV (inset) impersonating a soldier at Remembrance Day ceremonies, where he was interviewed by the CBC. He pleaded guilty to unlawful use of military uniform and unlawful use of military decoration. See story, page 7. JOE LOFARO/METRO, INSET: SCREENGRAB/CBC

New venue's first big gig? Shania, man!

Music. Wesley Clover Parks books Twain; organizers expect 25,000 concertgoers



TREVOR GREENWAY
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Ottawa's newest outdoor concert venue has booked its inaugural big act: country superstar Shania Twain.

The June 27 show will be her first Ottawa performance in more than a decade.

"Can you believe this?" asked an excited Terry Matthews, who in 2013 took over Wesley Clover Parks, formerly known as the Nepean National Equestrian Park.

Matthews, along with his daughter Karen Sparks, have been managing the venue since the City of Ottawa terminated its lease with the aging facility.

"This is an enormous,

beautiful piece of property beginning to bring in some unbelievable world-class events," said Matthews, who's expecting 25,000 people at the Shania Twain show.

"It puts us on the map. I don't care whether it's Shania Twain or whether it's somebody else, we now have an opportunity to do some quite unbelievable things."

The show will be a special part of Twain's Rock the Country tour. The concert will be the only outdoor show of her 48-city tour across North America and will feature special guests the Doobie Brothers, Dan + Shay and country music heartthrob Wes Mack.

Wesley Clover Parks augments Ottawa's growing outdoor venue boom, with AC/DC recently being booked to play TD place and other big stadium acts likely on the way as the country's capital city is becoming a hot destination for outdoor events.

Tickets go on sale March 13 at 10 a.m.

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A close-up portrait of David Beckham with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a blue crewneck sweatshirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression, his hands clasped in front of him. A tattoo is visible on his left hand.

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Transit

Complex system blamed for delays

Harry Gow remembers the first day of the O-Train pilot launch in 2001.

"Clean as a whistle," said Gow, who's now the president of Transport Action Canada. "Everything arrived on time. Everything left on time. The officials were happy."

Contrast that to Monday's launch of the \$60-million expanded O-Train Trillium Line. Signal control switch snafus lead to roughly hour-long delays for many passengers. Then, the city suspended the service on Tuesday due to more signalling issues.

The trains were running by Wednesday afternoon.

Gow blames the "complex" central traffic control (CTC) signalling system. He said the initial design was based on a German system, INDUSI. Back then, there was only one passing track at Carleton University, he said.

"This passing track was made so that no one had to throw a switch. You just went through the switch and there was a spring that shut a rail point, if necessary, after the train went through," he said. "That sounds like something technical but it was simple as hell. It was like a clothespin."

The current CTC system monitors and controls signals, track switches and other equipment along the Greenboro-Bayview link, according to Troy Charter, the city's acting general manager of transit operations.

If there's something wrong, the system will default into "safe mode."

John Manconi, the city's general manager of transit services, said the CTC system is necessary for when there are multiple passing tracks. There are now four trains on the tracks that pass each other.

"That system is needed to avoid head-on collisions," he said. "That adds to safety, which is our number one issue."

Under the expansion, the city replaced three Bombardier trains with six shiny new Alstom Coradia Lint trains, plus two new passing tracks near Gladstone and Brookfield.

LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

Passengers (finally) ride new O-Trains

Trillium Line.

City working to resolve malfunctioning signal control errors

It wasn't good PR when the new O-trains were shut down and, now that they're running again, the Ottawa Transit Commission is trying to manage expectations.

John Manconi, the general manager of the city's transit services, said no rail system can "100 per cent" guarantee it will never shut down.

"Will we have interruptions in the future? Absolutely. I cannot guarantee you we will not," said John Manconi, the city's general manager of transit services.

It wasn't a good start for the new trains. After a hyped-up



The new O-Train Trillium Line is back up and running after signal switch issues suspended the train service. The cold weather and snow are not to blame for the recent shutdown, according to OC Transpo. LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

opening, the expanded Trillium Line service was quickly closed down and remained so for two days because of signal light repairs. Train users were back on track again on Wednesday.

Neither of the two train technical glitches were due to the freeze-thaw weather in recent days, explained Michael Morgan, the city's director of rail operations for transit services. Morgan was hired in December and has run rail system lines in Australia and New Jersey.

One train issue — which was still under investigation

on Wednesday — was due to a signal control error. A coding problem put the system into a "funny state," explained Morgan.

The second issue was linked to the insulator joints that detect the train's position on certain areas of the rail line. Workers noticed that the clips holding one of the joints failed, which shorted out the circuit. An examination of all 32 clips showed that seven needed to be replaced.

"We are going back to the manufacturer to understand why the clips failed," Morgan

explained. "We are going back to the design team to say, what can we do differently? We believe that, in the short term, we're good to go and within a few days or a week we can replace them with a different configuration that will last longer."

Manconi said OC Transpo focuses on how it responds and deals with customer issues, like this one.

"You improve on it. You learn and grow from your mistakes and issues," he said. "What customers don't want to see organizations do is give up."

Zehaf Bibeau video will be shown Friday, source says

Members of Parliament will get the chance Friday to see the video Michael Zehaf Bibeau made last October before he killed a Canadian soldier and stormed Parliament Hill.

The RCMP will use an open meeting of the House of Commons public safety committee on Friday to provide a 'detailed update' of the investigation into Zehaf Bibeau's deadly attack, said a source familiar with the matter.

The source, who wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly and so spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed the video would be shown to the committee.

A spokesman for the public safety minister said Tuesday the federal government wants the

video to be released, despite the fact the investigation into the shooting is ongoing. The Commons public safety and Senate security committees have echoed that sentiment.

However, when asked about the matter Wednesday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said it's entirely up to the RCMP whether to release the video, since it's part of an ongoing police investigation.

"It's not my decision one way or the other," Harper told a news conference in Toronto.

"The video is in the possession of the RCMP, it's part of a police investigation, so it's their judgment when and where to release it."

Harper went on to say Canadians are all too aware of an

ever-present threat posed by "violent jihadism" and should continue to be vigilant and to co-operate with authorities.

In the days following the attack, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson said he wanted Canadians to see what he described as footage of Zehaf Bibeau explaining his actions in a deliberate and lucid manner.

He has since said that while some transcripts might be provided to the public, he didn't think the video would ever be released.

Harper was also asked whether the government intends to entertain possible amendments to its controversial anti-terrorism legislation.

Harper said he didn't want to prejudge the outcome of up-

coming committee hearings, but suggested additional changes are unlikely.

"We do always listen, but I should be very clear the government deliberated long and hard over these changes; they're changes that have been done in almost every other country," he said.

"In our view most of them are long overdue and we are fully committed to passage of the legislation, and I note the public is very, very strongly supportive of passage of the legislation also."

Opposition MPs have repeatedly criticized the government for boosting security powers in the legislation but not giving watchdogs more bite.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Nordstrom gala raises \$180k for cancer foundation, United Way

More than 1,800 fashionistas filled the Nordstrom Rideau Centre for its gala fundraiser on Wednesday night. The sold-out event raised \$180,000 for the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation and United Way Ottawa — plus everyone got a sneak peek at the store, which will open to the public on March 6. After Calgary, this marks the second Nordstrom location to open in Canada. LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

Scholarships help address mental health work gap

Jamie Hubley. Set up by Coun. Allan Hubley to honour his son, the \$2k funding jolt returns in 2015 to help two students enter the mental health field



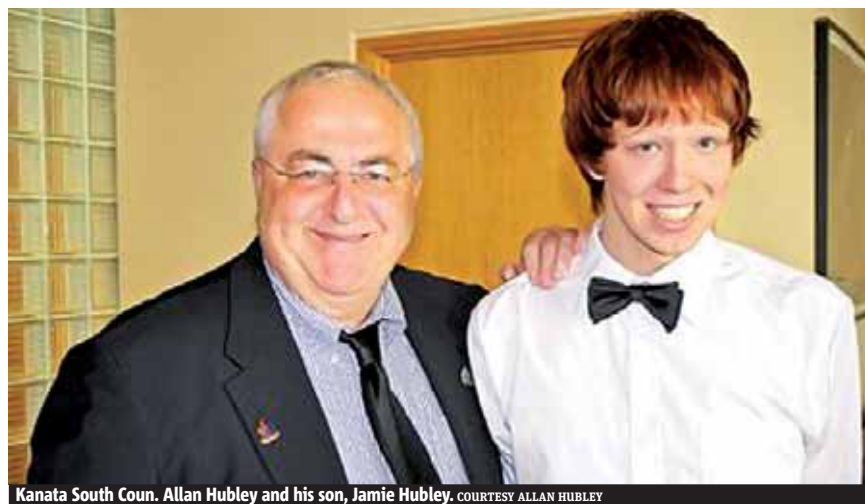
JOE LOFARO
joe.lofaro@metronews.ca

Two scholarships created in the memory of Allan Hubley's son, Jamie, are being offered again this year to address what the Kanata south councillor describes as a shortage in the mental health field.

Coun. Hubley lost his son to suicide in October 2011 after the 15-year-old suffered from depression and bullying for being openly gay at his west-end high school.

His father said the goal of the scholarships is to encourage people in the local community to get involved in the mental health care profession.

"We know from the experience with Jamie how difficult it is to get help. It's a challenge for families when really



Kanata South Coun. Allan Hubley and his son, Jamie Hubley. COURTESY ALLAN HUBLEY

what they want to focus on is how to protect their loved one," he said.

"We want to make it a little easier on families."

The first scholarship is worth \$2,000 annually and will be awarded to an applicant who intends to study mental health at a post-secondary institution.

The second scholarship, also worth \$2,000 on an annual basis, will be given to some-

one seeking post-secondary education with experience of a mental health disorder.

Hubley said he was amazed by the quality of the recipients in 2014, including a teenage girl raised by a single parent who suffered from mental health issues, but wanted to earn a university degree.

The Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (YSB), which operates a youth mental health

clinic, is administering the scholarships and is accepting applications until March 31.

"We found out too late about YSB," said Hubley.

"If we had gone to them earlier it would have been helpful. That's why we're telling everybody about them. We see the good that they do."

Scholarship recipients will be announced during Mental Health Week in May.

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Two women wear their feminist views on their sleeves, er, arms, during an International Women's Day celebration at Library and Archives Canada on March 8, 2014. PAUL THOMPSON/FOR METRO

Funny faux election calls for real debate

They may have silly, pretend political leanings, but four faux political parties will be answering serious questions about women's rights at a mock federal election debate on March 5 at Library and Archives Canada at 7 p.m. Amnesty International says this is a fun way to celebrate International Women's Day, while also pushing for a federal election debate on women's issues. Here's a bit about each pretend party courtesy of Jackie Hansen, Amnesty International's major campaigns and women's rights campaigner.

LUCY SCHOLEY

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Back to the Kitchen Party

This old-school party believes in "radical homemaking" and sees men and women as inherently different, rather than as equals. Expect the leader of this party to be wearing an apron, carrying a rolling pin and mostly advocating for child care and reproductive issues.

Question example: Do you believe that the battle for women's rights has been won?

The 1% Party

Exactly as its name implies, this party wants to put women in power. We're talking Fortune 500, CEOs and heads-of-state-type positions. It's all about the economy for the one-percenters, and women are the "untapped" potential — even if that means "usurping masculinities."

Question example: What would your government do to promote women's leadership?

Equal Path Party

It's all about equal access for this party, including wage, resources and opportunities. Affirmative action is ideal when it comes to equality-building and women should be prioritized for services and programs. This party is focused on numbers and stats.

Question example: On average in OECD countries, women still make 0.75\$ to the dollar. What would your government do to close the pay gap?

Women of the World Unite! Party

These represent the radical feminists. Struggles of class-segregated, racialized and disabled women are key to women's rights for this political party. If elected, they would tackle power and privilege. They tend to engage through mass protests.

Question example: What action should this country take to end violence against women at home and make us a leader in fighting this problem globally?



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Denis Benoit, president and CEO of Concert International, announces the lineup for the 2012 Capital Hoedown festival at The Crazy Horse in Kanata on Nov. 22, 2011. An effort is apparently being made to revive the festival. JOE LOFARO/METRO

Hoedown due for comeback: Email

Music. Shuttered festival appears to be preparing for a 'monumental' relaunch



JOE LOFARO
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An unexpected email blast that included the Country Music Association of Ontario suggests there are efforts underway to revive the beleaguered Capital Hoedown.

It appears to have been

sent by one of the organizers of the still-defunct country music festival. The hoedown was hit by allegations of fiscal mismanagement in 2012.

The email includes a link to an online survey and notes Capital Hoedown is planning a "monumental" return to the Ottawa area next summer.

"The festival will take place within 20 kilometres of the City of Ottawa, on a 400-acre festival site," according to the email.

"Onsite camping facilities will be available for the entire duration of the

festival. Capital Hoedown's entertainment lineup will feature the biggest, best and most prolific names in country music."

Capital Hoedown did not respond to an email from Metro on Tuesday afternoon.

The 2012 festival was cancelled after Denis Benoit, president and CEO of Concert International, failed to pay the city on time to rent a space in Walter Baker Park.

Follow Joe Lofaro on
Twitter @giuseppelo



Crime

Firearms and drugs seized after traffic stop

Three shotguns were taken in a haul when officers stopped a car in Ottawa South, police announced on Wednesday.

A 26-year-old man was arrested after police pulled him over early on Feb. 28 near Bank Street and Walkley Road. A search of the car led to the discovery of a handgun and drugs, so a search

warrant was requested and the guns and gangs unit called in.

They found the shotguns, ammunition, more drugs and cash.

Bestun Fazil of Ottawa is facing various weapons and drug charges. **METRO**

Crime

Police seeking suspect in pharmacy robbery

Ottawa police are on the hunt for the man who

robbed a pharmacy on the 400 block of Holland Avenue, officers announced on Wednesday.

In what was a brazen daylight robbery, a man entered the pharmacy at about 1:30 p.m. in the afternoon on Jan. 22 and threatened the staff with what police are calling an "edged weapon."

He fled with a small quantity of money after asking for cash and prescription drugs. No one was injured.

An arrest warrant has been issued for James (Jamie) Jackson, 32. **METRO**



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Veterans Affairs morale drops with staffing levels

The most recent survey of federal employees shows Veterans Affairs Canada is an increasingly unhappy place with plunging morale and a frazzled workforce.

The evaluation, published by Statistics Canada for the federal Treasury Board, asks dozens of questions on topics ranging from satisfaction with equipment to workplace harassment.

It shows that the number of staff who say the quality of their work has suffered — either because of fewer resources or a lack of departmental stability — has more than doubled since 2008.

That level of dissatisfaction is between 1.5 and two times the rate of the overall federal civil service.

And the surveys, conducted every three years since 2008, show a steady decline in employee satisfaction that appears to mirror Conservative job cuts at Veterans Affairs that began in 2011.

There's a clear connection between the two, said

Figures

- Federal government performance reports released last year show that between 2009 and 2014, Veterans Affairs eliminated 897 positions across the department, with 33 per cent of those cuts coming in the section that administers pensions and awards.

- Figures tabled in the House of Commons at the end of January show that 205,213 military and RCMP veterans sought federal assistance in 2014, a decrease of seven per cent from 2006. That alone is sufficient justification for cuts to the workforce, the government has said in the past.

Liberal veterans critic Frank Valeriotte — especially since the surveys also broadly track

the size of the department through the survey response rate.

"It's just another indication of how deep this government has cut and the effect it has had," Valeriotte said.

The department recognizes the results of the survey and has already taken steps to address the concerns in areas of workload, communication and training, said Veterans Affairs spokeswoman Janice Summerby.

"Senior management is committed to increasing consulting with staff members and taking action so that service excellence for veterans remains paramount," Summerby said.

The survey also found 86 per cent of Veterans Affairs staff were proud of the work that they do, she added.

That may well be, Valeriotte acknowledged, but clearly service has suffered, judging from the number of anecdotal complaints from veterans, he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Franck Gervais

Franck Gervais, 32, inside the Canadian War Museum on Nov. 11, shortly after identifying himself as a sergeant to a CBC reporter in live TV interview during a Remembrance Day ceremony.

Unidentified

Gervais' unidentified wife accompanied him into the museum while he was still posing as a soldier and spoke with veterans.

Rod McLeod

Rod McLeod, a real Canadian veteran of the Royal Canadian Artillery, was in the museum on Remembrance Day to promote his new book, *Vigil*, on the Canadian contribution in the war in Afghanistan.



COURTESY OF ROD MCLEOD

Fake soldier makes vet 'sick'

Remembrance Day. Retired lieutenant promoting his new book talks about man charged for unlawfully wearing military uniform

After Franck Gervais impersonated a decorated soldier at the Remembrance Day ceremony in Ottawa in front of thousands of Canadians, he stayed in character as he accompanied his wife into the Canadian War Museum and shook hands with veterans.

One of those veterans was Rod McLeod, a retired lieutenant with the Royal Canadian Artillery who had been promoting his new book, *Vigil*, which tells the story of Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan and the sacrifices made by dozens of uniformed men and women.

Gervais, sporting a Canadian Armed Forces ceremonial dress with medals, such as the medal of bravery, asked McLeod to sign a copy of his new book.

Days later, McLeod learned Gervais was an imposter who was later charged by Ottawa police for unlawfully wearing a military uniform, unlawfully using military decoration and impersonating a public officer.

Reached by phone in Arizona Wednesday evening, McLeod told Metro he was "sick to my stomach" when his initial suspicions about Gervais were confirmed.

"I think I wrote 'Here's real Canadian hero' is what I think I put in his book," said McLeod.

"I'm ex-military and I have great respect for those who spent time in Afghanistan and the work that they did over there. It was almost like I wanted to wash my hands after I found out what this guy was all about."

Earlier Wednesday, Gervais

covered his face with his Canada Goose hood as he stymied his way into the courthouse to enter a guilty plea.

In a barely audible voice, he pleaded guilty to unlawful use of military uniform and unlawful use of military decoration. His other two counts of impersonating a public officer will be withdrawn at his sentencing hearing on May 11, according to Crown prosecutor Mark Moors.

In the museum on Nov. 11 Gervais told a story about how he earned the medal of bravery after having rescued passengers from a plane crash in Banff, according to McLeod.

In a written statement he provided to Ottawa police Const. Evan Hung on Nov. 22, McLeod wrote how Gervais' behaviour in the museum was "clearly self-serving."

"He lingered around the area for about 20 minutes shaking hands and discussing his exploits." **JOE LOFARO/METRO**

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A note to Heritage Minister Shelly Glover, pictured, says it's hard to predict when the program will end due to ongoing cases. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Economics

Standing pat: Bank of Canada keeps interest rate at 0.75%

The Bank of Canada maintained its key interest rate Wednesday as it credited global economic conditions and its January cut for helping the country weather the bruising oil slump.

The central bank's latest policy announcement, which

kept the overnight rate target at 0.75 per cent, also contained a slightly sunnier outlook, leaving many analysts with the impression there won't be any other reductions any time soon.

It was the bank's first policy decision since January, when governor Stephen Poloz stunned markets by lowering the rate a quarter of a percentage point from one per cent. At the time, Poloz called it a necessary insurance because lower oil prices would

be "unambiguously negative" for the economy. Since then, the bank said the evolution of oil prices as well as the global and Canadian economies had largely unfolded in line with its projections.

It underlined several areas where conditions landed close to its assumptions: the stronger performance in non-energy exports and investment, the economic growth reading for the final three months of 2014 and core inflation near its two per

cent target.

"Financial conditions in Canada have eased materially since January, in response to the bank's recent monetary policy action and to global financial developments," the bank said in a statement.

The bank also said the bulk of the oil slump's negative effects will strike the Canadian economy in the first half of 2015—and could be more front loaded than it had predicted.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Axed court program still winding down

Five to seven years away. And millions of dollars to boot as ongoing Charter rights cases make it difficult to predict finish date

It will take between five and seven more years and several million dollars to fully wind down a program — scrapped by the Conservatives nearly nine years ago — that helped finance lawsuits from those seeking to defend their Charter rights.

That's because a small number of such cases are still working their way through the courts, according to a recently released document.

Officials at the Department of Canadian Heritage — which has been footing the bill for the program during its protracted windup — say the five-to-seven-year window is just a guess, since the remaining cases could drag on even longer.

"Since it is dependent on the progress of the cases in the court system, it is not possible to predict with certainty the time required," says an August 2014 briefing note to Heritage Minister Shelly Glover.

The Canadian Press ob-

tained the document under the Access to Information Act.

The Conservative government announced in September 2006 that it was eliminating the court-challenges program, which helped pay for court cases that mostly dealt with equality and language rights.

The origins of the program date back to 1978. Former prime minister Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government scrapped the program in 1992, but it was re-established two years later by the Chrétien Liberals.

Close to 400 cases had already been approved and were at various stages of the court system when the Conservatives cancelled the program. The government promised to fund those remaining cases until their last stage of appeal.

The number of open cases had dropped to 36 by last spring, according to the briefing note. Canadian Heritage officials told Glover that the current five-year, \$5-million funding agreement runs out at the end of this month.

"To continue the wind-down of the (court challenges program) under the current terms and conditions, there will need to be a contribution agreement in place by March 31, 2015," says the note. "Currently, approximately \$1 million has been committed by the (court challenges program) for ongoing cases and it is anticipated that up to an additional \$3.5 million may be required to fund the remaining cases, which are at various stages, until they are completed."

The department is refusing to say if a new contribution agreement is in place or if the current one will be extended.

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"Since it is dependent on the progress of the cases in the court system, it is not possible to predict with certainty the time required."

An August 2014 briefing note to Heritage Minister Shelly Glover

Government wasteful spending awards handed out in Ottawa

The Teddy. Award named after former bureaucrat Ted Weatherill who was fired in 1999 over lavish expense claims

Former federal cabinet minister and London, Ont., mayor Joe Fontana has been named recipient of an award he may not want to accept.

Fontana is the winner of the 2015 federal Teddy Waste Award, a dubious honour bestowed on individuals and governments each year by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. The former Liberal MP was convicted last June of breach of trust, fraud and uttering forged documents after a contract was altered for his son's 2005 wedding and Fontana submitted the \$1,700

Other nominees

- Public Works and Government Services Canada earned a Teddy for spending \$65,000 to repurchase a bulldozer it had confiscated and sold for just over \$5,500, rather than destroying it as originally ordered by a court. Eventually, the bulldozer was destroyed anyway.
- Former Alberta Premier Alison Redford was cited for the remodelling of a penthouse apartment. Just the plans for the alterations, which included an \$832,000 Zamboni storage shed and skating rink that was never built, cost the province's taxpayers \$173,000.

invoice to the House of Commons for reimbursement, claiming it was for a function with the finance minister.

While \$1,700 is hardly the largest amount of money mis-spent by a Canadian politician, Canadian Taxpayers Federation national director Aaron Wudrick said the awards — gilded china pigs — are subjective.

And the most outrageous

part, said Wudrick, is that, despite being convicted of fraud, Fontana continues to collect his pension. "Despite intentionally forging documents to defraud taxpayers, Fontana retains his annual \$122,000 MP pension, courtesy of the taxpayer," Wudrick told an Ottawa news conference.

Ontario's Ministry of Energy got the nod for the provincial Teddy for spending

\$1 billion to install 4.8 million so-called smart meters in homes in a program that has been beset with troubles.

The province's auditor general has found cost overruns that could double the initial price. Hundreds of thousands of the electronically monitored power-consumption meters have been unable to transmit data. Several dozen have caught fire.

Halifax Councillor Brad Johns won the municipal award for buying a \$25,000 robotic Christmas tree.

And the federation gave its Lifetime Achievement Award to Vancouver's TransLink, for more than a decade of waste and tax hikes.

The Teddy is named after Ted Weatherill, a former federal bureaucrat who was fired in 1999 for submitting lavish expense claims, including a \$700 lunch for two.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Canadian Taxpayers Federation Director Aaron Wudrick and pig mascot Porky the Waste Hater are seen behind the CTF awards, after the federation presented the 17th Annual Teddy Government Waste Award Winners during a news conference in Ottawa on Wednesday. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Charities seek clarity on public policy role

Politics. Letter sent to five parties urge election commitment to reforming current regulations

As the country prepares for the next federal election, 18 national charities are seeking clearer rules about how much

a role their sector can play in debates on public policy.

A letter sent to each of the five political parties asks for a platform commitment to modernizing the existing regime governing charitable groups.

Without it, there's the risk of losing what the civil society sector can contribute to the broader public good, says the letter, signed by

environment, public policy and international aid organizations.

"The work of charities contributes greatly to Canada's democracy and the health and vigour of our democracy depends on much more than citizens voting in elections," the letter said.

"The extent to which elections are informed and motivated by citizens engaging

with each other on issues they care about is an indicator of the overall health of our political system."

But charities are now fearful of carrying out that work thanks to the ongoing crack-down by Canada Revenue Agency, the letter said.

Since 2012, CRA has been auditing charities to look for those spending more than the legal 10 per cent of their

Under the microscope

The CRA audits have targeted organizations ranging from a local bird-watching group to the major Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

But there are broad interpretations of what that means and to what extent groups can engage in the policy development process, the letter said.

"The result is a chill, where charities feel that their efforts are being discouraged, subjected to rhetorical attacks or harsh or arbitrary review," the letter says.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

time and resources on political activity.

Backlog. CPP disability cheques finally arriving

The cheques appear to be pouring in for disabled people who have spent years trying to get Canada Pension Plan disability benefits as the Conservative government's so-called spike unit even settles some "questionable" cases.

With a federal election in the offing, advocates for the disabled say the unit's doctors, lawyers and medical adjudicators are plowing through outstanding files and seem to be giving applicants the benefit of the doubt even in iffy cases.

Some who were denied benefits have been waiting as long as five years for their appeals to be heard. Their situation only worsened with the debut of the government's social security tribunal in April 2013.

Although it was designed to streamline the appeals process and cut costs by replacing four separate boards, the backlog of CPP disability cases ballooned during the tribunal's first two years of operation.

Allison Schmidt, a Regina-based pension-disability case manager who's been a vocal critic of the tribunal, says she's delighted that so many of her clients are suddenly getting their benefits.

"I am thrilled, absolutely, that these people finally have justice after spending years having this ordeal hanging over their heads," she said, adding some lost their homes and had to cash in their RRSPs while awaiting benefits.

"But why is it happening now? Because it's looked bad on the government. It's purely political, and it's appalling that it required a looming election to get them to take action."

She adds that, even though her clients are elated that their cases have been settled, their joy often gives way to anger that it took the government so long to help them.

A spokesman for Employment and Social Development Canada says the department's spike unit is taking a second look at cases and offering

settlements to people who are now deemed to meet the CPP disability criteria.

Quoted

"Why is it happening now? Because it's looked bad on the government. It's purely political, and it's appalling that it required a looming election to get them to take action."

Allison Schmidt, a Regina-based pension-disability case manager

Some of those settlements are the result of appellants providing updated information about their health, said Simon Rivet.

"While we are working expeditiously to address the inventory, all cases are being treated factually and fairly using the existing eligibility criteria of the program," he added in an email.

The department has said it intends to wipe out by this summer the 11,000-case backlog — mostly CPP disability files — plaguing the social security tribunal. The spike unit is working separately from the tribunal itself.

Schmidt says the unit is working at breakneck pace and awarding settlements even in cases that "would have been a tough slog" at the tribunal.

"All of a sudden, settlements are coming in on a frantic basis on cases that never would have been settled in the past, on files where you shake your head and say: 'Really?'"

Another advocate, who didn't want to be identified because his clients didn't authorize him to speak publicly about their cases, agreed.

"The cheques are rolling in," said the representative. "They even awarded those whose entitlements might have been considered questionable."

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Tourists escaping into jail

HI-Ottawa Jail Hostel. The heritage building has long been considered one of Canada's most haunted

JEN
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For more than 150 years, Ottawa's first jailhouse and the site of the high-profile execution of Thomas D'Arcy McGee's killer, Patrick J. Whelan, has brought a unique presence to Nicholas Street.

The Carleton County Gaol was the area's main jail until it closed its doors in 1972. That's when Hostel International took over, turning the historic building into a popular hostel, the only one of its kind in North America, while leaving much of the original structure intact.

"There are two different halves to the building," says HI-Ottawa Jail Hostel food and beverage manager Kyle Woods. "There's the half where the jail cells were and there's the half that was called The Governor's Mansion, which housed the warden and the staff. We have rooms that are just regular-styled rooms and then we have the jail cell rooms."

Because of the historic significance of the building, it's been designated an Ontario Heritage Property, meaning its historical integrity has to be preserved, which is why the hostel still looks very much like a jail today.

It's also long been considered one of the most haunted buildings in Canada, though Woods believes the chance of guests actually seeing a ghost really depends on their imagination.

"It's definitely a creepy building when you take into account that it was a prison and there were official hangings here," he says, adding that he personally doesn't think the hostel is haunted.

Quoted

"It's definitely a creepy building when you take into account that it was a prison and there were official hangings here."

Kyle Woods, HI-Ottawa Jail Hostel food and beverage manager

But that doesn't mean hostellers haven't reported sightings. Woods says some guests have claimed to have heard noises at night or spotted an apparition at the end of a long hallway. A number of ghost hunters have also visited the hostel.

For Woods and the rest of the staff, though, it's not the ghosts (or alleged ghosts) that make the hostel interesting: it's the people.

"It's always a pretty good hodgepodge of all kinds of different people," he says.

"I always make the joke that it's like travelling without travelling because you meet so many people from around the world."

Rates

BOOK A STAY AT THE OTTAWA JAIL HOSTEL

The HI-Ottawa Jail Hostel offers private jail cell rooms or shared four-, six- and eight-bed accommodations. Rates start as low as \$34 per night. Hostelling International members save \$5 a night in a shared room, and \$10 a night in a private room.

Bookings include free tours of the jail, linens, WiFi and breakfast.

For more
info, visit
hihostels.ca



Visitors to the HI-Ottawa Jail Hostel can book a stay in former jail cells. PHOTOS COURTESY OF HI-OTTAWA JAIL HOSTEL

Sentencing initiative a political move: Critics

New legislation. 'A life sentence in Canada will henceforth mean exactly that — a sentence for life,' said PM Harper

The Conservative government's latest tough-on-crime initiative to make life sentence a sentence for life without parole appears to be aimed at scoring political points rather than protecting the public, some critics and legal experts said Wednesday.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper told a Toronto crowd his government will introduce new legislation next week to ensure that what he called the country's "most dangerous violent offenders" will not be allowed back on the streets.

The new bill will "ensure that for the most heinous offenders and the most horrific crimes, a life sentence in Canada will henceforth mean exactly that — a sentence for life,"

In detail

Currently, those who are convicted of first-degree murder face an automatic sentence of life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years.

Harper announced in front of a crowd that included families of murder victims.

The legislation would apply to those convicted of first-degree murder involving: the killing of police officers or correctional officers; terrorism; kidnapping or sexual assault; and crimes "of a particularly brutal nature." It would also apply to those who commit high treason, an offence that involves attempting to harm or kill the Queen, taking arms against Canada or helping an enemy at war with Canada.

While hesitant to judge the proposed changes until the bill is tabled, some critics and legal experts said the announcement raises several red flags.

"We already have a system that recognizes that the Paul Bernardos and the Picktons of the world should never be released," Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said. "I think a lot of this is campaigning on fear, which (Harper) is extremely good at, but I think we can all agree that bad criminals should not be released and we have to make sure that we're getting that balance right."

"Most dangerous killers are already denied parole and held for life," NDP justice critic Françoise Boivin said in a statement.

"Sentencing reform should be focused on improving public safety, not on scoring political points," she said.

Benjamin Berger, a criminal-law expert at York University's Osgoode Hall law school, said the announcement comes across as "political sleight of hand."

"As things currently stand, the community is protected by the individualized judgments of a parole board," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Ontario town suing U.S. firm

A guardrail with an ET Plus end unit is seen in this photo. Authorities across Canada are awaiting test results from the U.S. before deciding what to do about thousands of the safety devices, which could cause guardrails to rip through cars and motorists instead of protecting them in crashes. The town of Stratford, Ont., has launched a \$500-million class action against the manufacturer. The lawsuit, filed in Ontario Superior Court, alleges Trinity Industries secretly made unauthorized changes to the ET Plus about 10 years ago and failed to warn anyone about "serious failures."

PHOTO: COURTESY TRINITY INDUSTRIES. TEXT: THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto

Snowden Archive featuring leaked docs unveiled

Terrorism is "an extraordinarily rare natural disaster" and should not be used as an excuse by government to pass laws that limit our rights and freedoms, former U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden said Wednesday.

Snowden made the comments through video link at the Toronto unveiling of the Snowden Archive — an online database of hundreds of classified U.S. government documents he leaked to the media in 2013. The archive is a joint project between Canadian Journalists for Free Expression and the Politics of Surveillance Project at the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto. Asked to comment on Ottawa's anti-terrorism bill, Snowden said it was "an emulation of the American Patriot Act," adding that freedom and liberty are worth some level of risk. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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Coal mine explosion kills at least 24 in eastern Ukraine

Donetsk. Seven bodies were loaded onto a truck late Wednesday

A rebel-held city scarred by months of conflict in eastern Ukraine suffered more tragedy Wednesday when a methane gas explosion in a coal mine killed at least 24 workers and left nine missing.

As rescue efforts stretched past sundown, separatist authorities were accused by Ukraine's government of failing to do enough to save the lives of the miners.

The blast occurred before dawn more than 1,000 metres underground at the Zasyadko mine in the city of Donetsk in the coal-rich Donbass region. Nearly a year of bitter fighting by pro-Moscow rebels and Ukrainian troops in the east has killed more than 6,000 people.

Rebel officials said the accident was caused by the ever-present danger of methane gas,

rather than artillery fire.

There were contradictory accounts of the toll of dead and missing by the rival authorities. The rebel government that controls Donetsk was slow to divulge information, while a senior official in the capital of Kyiv was swift to give a death toll of 32, only to retract it several hours later.

The blast occurred as 230 workers were in the mine, and nearly 200 of them were quickly evacuated, but uncertainty lingered throughout the day about dozens of others.

Rebel officials insisted into the afternoon that only one person had died. But a slightly wounded miner who gave his name only as Sergei told The Associated Press that he saw five bodies being pulled out.

By nightfall, Yuliana Bedilko, a representative for the rebel-managed rescue services at the site of accident, said another 23 bodies had been located below ground, bringing the overall number of confirmed dead to 24.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Ukrainian coal miners load the bodies of colleagues killed in Wednesday morning's explosion at the Zasyadko mine in Donetsk, Ukraine. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tsarnaev carried out Boston bombing: Defence



Boston Marathon bombing survivor Marc Fucarile, centre, and his wife Jennifer, left, walk past protester Jose Briceno, right, as they leave federal court, Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The question, for all practical purposes, is no longer whether Dzhokhar Tsarnaev took part in the Boston Marathon bombing. It's whether he should die for it.

In a startling opening statement at the nation's biggest terrorism trial in nearly 20 years, Tsarnaev's lawyer told a jury that the 21-year-old former college student committed the crime.

"It WAS him," said defence attorney Judy Clarke, one of the nation's foremost death-penalty specialists.

But in a strategy aimed at saving Tsarnaev from a death

sentence, she argued that he had fallen under the malevolent influence of his now-dead older brother, Tamerlan.

"The evidence will not establish and we will not argue that Tamerlan put a gun to Dzhokhar's head or that he forced him to join in the plan," Clarke said, "but you will hear evidence about the kind of influence that this older brother had."

Three people were killed and more than 260 hurt when two shrapnel-packed pressure-cooker bombs exploded near the finish line on April 15, 2013.

Tsarnaev, then 19, was accused of carrying out the attacks with 26-year-old Tamerlan, who was killed in a shootout and getaway attempt days later.

Prosecutors contend the brothers — ethnic Chechens who arrived from Russia more than a decade ago — were driven by anger over U.S. wars in Muslim lands.

Federal prosecutors used their opening statements — along with heartbreaking testimony and grisly video — to sketch a picture of torn limbs, screams and the smell of sulfur

and burned hair in the streets and to paint Tsarnaev as a cold-blooded killer.

Tsarnaev planted a bomb designed to "tear people apart and create a bloody spectacle," then hung out with his college buddies as if he didn't have a care in the world, federal prosecutor William Weinreb said.

"He believed that he was a soldier in a holy war against Americans," Weinreb said. "He also believed that by winning that victory, he had taken a step toward reaching paradise."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Hillary Clinton used private email account

Hillary Rodham Clinton ran her own personal computer system for handling emails while serving as secretary of state, according to Internet records reviewed by The Associated Press. The practice offered a measure of privacy to one of the world's most scrutinized women, but could subject her to more criticism ahead of a likely presiden-

tial campaign.

Clinton's email practices attracted attention this week when The New York Times reported that she had exclusively used a personal email account for state business. A spokesman said that wasn't improper, and that emails would be archived in accordance with government rules. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nuclear deal. Kerry rebuts Netanyahu's criticism

U.S. officials sought Wednesday to tamp down expectations of a substantial preliminary nuclear deal with Iran by the March deadline while working to move past the political dust kicked up by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's criticism of an emerging agreement's contours.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Washington was well aware of the potential nuclear danger Iran poses to countries in the region and will endorse only an agreement that seriously and verifiably crimps Tehran's ability to make atomic arms.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Libya. Italy rescues more than 1,000 migrants

In dramatic sea rescues north of Libya, a flotilla of ships saved more than 1,000 migrants and refugees, while 10 migrants perished in the southern Mediterranean, Italian officials said Wednesday.

Rescue vessels, including from Italy's coast guard and navy, and three cargo

ships saved 941 people in seven separate operations that began Tuesday, Italy's coast guard said. On Wednesday, the coast guard and two cargo ships rescued 94 migrants whose motorized dinghy was in distress 65 kms north of Libya, the coast guard said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. attempted to deport man shot by L.A. police

California. No country would claim homeless man with mental illness, says U.S. Immigration

A homeless foreigner shot to death by Los Angeles police was in the country illegally after serving time for a bank robbery but couldn't be deported because no country would take him, U.S. immigration authorities said Wednesday.

France issued travel documents for a man identified as Charley Saturmin Robinet but rescinded them in June 2013 after determining it was an assumed name and the man was really from Cameroon, said U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) spokeswoman Virginia Kice in a statement.

ICE, which had issued a deportation order in April 2013, said Cameroon consular officials failed to respond to repeated requests for travel

documents. Cameroonian officials could not immediately be reached to comment.

The man, known as "Africa" in the rundown Los Angeles area of Skid Row, was shot to death Sunday. The confrontation that led to his death was recorded on a bystander's cellphone and viewed millions of times online. Authorities said the man tried to grab a rookie police officer's gun, prompting three other officers to shoot him.

Like many people on Skid Row, the man suffered from mental illness and his background was murky. He told U.S. authorities he was from Cameroon and gave a different name — Keunang — after France rejected him, according to two U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The man was in immigration custody in September 2013 when a federal judge in California ordered him to a halfway house. The man had no place to stay and no permanent address.



This February 2000 photo shows a man, mistakenly identified by the assumed name of Charley Saturmin Robinet, who was killed by L.A. police on Sunday.
VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

He had served roughly 13 years in prison and spent six months in the halfway house before he was released in May 2014, said Ed Ross, a spokes-

man for the Bureau of Prisons.

Kice said the man regularly reported to immigration officials as required by terms of his release. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Ferguson. Report blasts police for discrimination

The Justice Department cleared on Wednesday a white former Ferguson, Mo., police officer in the fatal shooting of an unarmed black 18-year-old — but also issued a scathing report calling for sweeping changes in city law-enforcement practices it called discriminatory and unconstitutional.

It found that the shooting occurred in an environment of systematic mistreatment of blacks, in which officials swapped racist emails and jokes without punishment and black residents were disproportionately stopped, searched, fined

for petty offences and subjected to excessive force.

Officials announced 26 recommendations, including training officers in how to de-escalate confrontations and banning the use of ticketing and arrest quotas.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Changes

Ferguson no longer issues failure-to-appear warrants and has rescinded warrants for nearly 600 defendants.

Gay-marriage decision

Mobile, Ala., stops issuing marriage licences of all kinds

The probate office in one of Alabama's biggest counties said Wednesday it will quit issuing marriage licences to anyone, after the Alabama Supreme Court ruled the state's

ban on same-sex marriage is legal despite a federal court's decision to the contrary.

The all-Republican Supreme Court ordered Alabama's 68 probate judges Tuesday to stop issuing marriage licences to gay couples. The probate court in Mobile said Wednesday it would quit issuing marriage licences to anyone while reviewing the decision. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**



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McDonald's. Antibiotic and hormone-free fare on menu

McDonald's says it plans to start using chicken raised without antibiotics commonly used in humans, and milk from cows that are not treated with an artificial growth hormone.

The company says the chicken change will take place within the next two years. It says suppliers will still be able to use a type of antibiotic called ionophores that keep chickens healthy and aren't used in humans. The milk change will take place later this year.

Chipotle and Panera already say they serve chicken raised without antibiotics, but the announcement by

Image

McDonald's Corp. is struggling to transform its image amid intensifying competition from smaller rivals positioning themselves as more wholesome alternatives. It saw customer visits to U.S. stores decline two years in a row.

McDonald's is notable because of its size; the company has more than 14,000 U.S. locations. Chipotle has nearly 1,800 locations, while Panera has almost 1,900 locations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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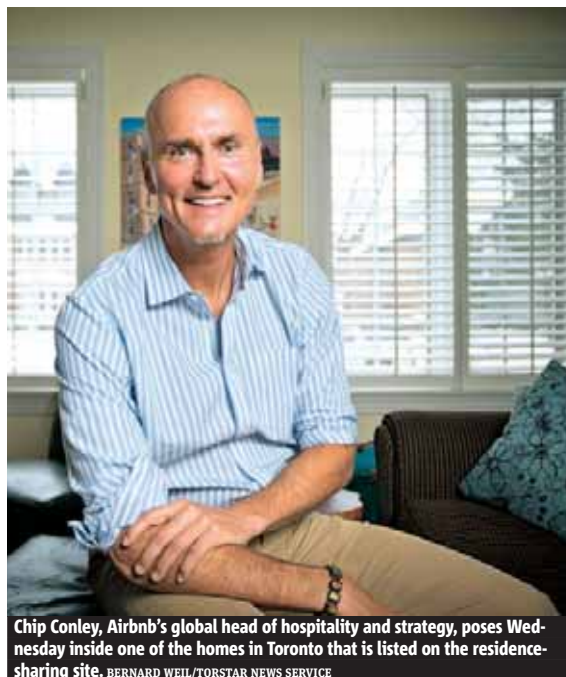
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Airbnb sees enough room, hotels don't share the view



Chip Conley, Airbnb's global head of hospitality and strategy, poses Wednesday inside one of the homes in Toronto that is listed on the residence-sharing site. BERNARD WEIL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Sharing economy.

Airbnb has run into stiff opposition in some jurisdictions including New York

Chip Conley believes Airbnb, a fast-growing company that links homeowners with travellers seeking accommodation, is not in direct competition with traditional hotels.

"There is room for both of them," said Conley, who is head of global hospitality and strategy for Airbnb, during a visit to Toronto on Wednesday.

Conley, 54, who joined Airbnb in 2013, says he understands both Airbnb and the hotel business. He was the founder of the Joie de Vivre boutique hotel chain and still owns 18 hotels in California and New York.

"The message that I've been saying to the hotel industry is that 'this is not an either-

or,' " Conley said. "I think we can coexist."

But Terry Mundell, president and CEO of the Greater Toronto Hotel Association, disputes such a suggestion.

"The issue is not about either-or," he said. "This is an issue about paying and remitting commercial taxes the same as any other commercial enterprise."

A City of Toronto official says he has not received any complaints about Airbnb.

"At this time we are not considering regulating it," said Mark Sraga, the city's director of investigations, in an email. "Toronto's zoning bylaw does not restrict renting out rooms."

Conley insisted Airbnb is not evading taxes, noting Airbnb is paying occupancy or hotel taxes where required, including in cities such as Amsterdam, San Francisco and Chicago.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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No-poaching lawsuit. Judge OK with \$415M settlement

A U.S. federal judge has tentatively approved a \$415 million US settlement in a major class action lawsuit by Silicon Valley workers who accused Apple Inc., Google Inc. and other tech companies of making an illegal agreement not to hire each other's employees.

Judge Lucy Koh had rejected an earlier settlement offer, saying it didn't offer enough compensation to about 64,000 workers affected by the case. She cited evidence of a corporate conspiracy to make it difficult for tech work-

ers to negotiate better jobs at rival companies.

Koh said she was satisfied this week after the companies increased their earlier offer of \$324.5 million.

She invited final comments on the deal before she grants final approval at a hearing on June 9.

If Koh approves the latest settlement, it would avoid a potentially embarrassing trial for the companies.

The lawsuit also included Intel Corp. and Adobe Systems Inc. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Uber. Ride-hailing service buys mapping specialist

Uber Technologies is buying digital mapping specialist deCarta in a deal that may help the rapidly growing ride-hailing service lessen its dependence on navigation services from Google and Apple, a pair of potential rivals.

Although deCarta isn't as well-known as Google Maps, its technology is extensively used by consumers. The On-Star system built into cars made by General Motors Co. relies on deCarta, as do smartphone makers Samsung Elec-

tronics and BlackBerry Inc.

The acquisition will provide Uber's drivers with another way to find passengers summoning rides on the company's mobile app and deliver them to their destinations more quickly.

The deCarta deal comes a month after an unconfirmed report that Google Inc. is planning a rival ride-hailing service that would draw upon the driverless cars that the company has been building and testing. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Facebook

Zuckerberg says staying on track

No cars and solar power for Facebook, it seems.

Asked at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain, if the world's biggest social network had ambitions outside of social media and the Internet, CEO Mark Zuckerberg says Facebook's goal of connecting people globally is "pretty broad." That includes enabling people to share their own photos and videos and message each other as well as giving businesses a platform. THE CANADIAN PRESS

RRSP

Fewer Canadians contributing: Poll

A survey from the Bank of Montreal, conducted in the final week before the March 2 deadline, found 57 per cent of Canadians had made an RRSP contribution for the 2014 tax year. That was down from 65 per cent for the 2013 tax year and 62 per cent the year before that. But the average contribution, at \$3,737, was up about \$200. THE CANADIAN PRESS

VOICES

BIGGER IS BETTER, BUT SMALLER IS CHEAPER

Micro condos are being hyped as the next great thing in urban living. But since when did living in a shoebox become the property-owning dream?



MELISSA DUNNE
readers@metronews.ca

In the comedy *Wanderlust*, Paul Rudd and Jennifer Aniston get sweet-talked into buying an, ahem, micro-loft in Manhattan. At the time (the halcyon days of 2012), I laughed and laughed. Oh, New Yorkers living in their tiny boxes in the sky.

I'm not laughing now. Flash forward to early 2015 and micro condos have become one of the only serious options for some city-dwelling Canadians, like myself. With the average price of detached homes in both Vancouver and Toronto soaring past the \$1-million mark, the dream of home ownership is now out of many average people's grasp.

Micro condos, realtor-speak for a condo unit that runs between 225 and 400 square feet, suddenly seem appealing. The spaces tend to attract investors looking to rent them out, rich people looking for a pied-à-terre, and not-so-rich people looking to finally get on the property ladder.

A few years ago I would have said I would never buy a micro condo. Now, I say, "Never say never." The Manhattanization of the city I call home means even the average price of a condo apartment in the 416 was an eye-watering \$369,655 last month, according to the Toronto Real Estate Board.



Murphy beds used to be almost synonymous with dingy flats. But thanks to the marketing of micro condos, space-saving features are being touted as the hip new way to do city living. PHOTO BY SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

You can buy in for less if you're willing to downsize dramatically. Out in the Vancouver suburb of Surrey, a developer recently garnered media attention by reportedly offering units starting at \$93,900. The catch? The suites started at 316 square feet. Another project in the heart of Toronto got my attention with its clever features, like a dish-

washer in a drawer, to maximize space. The location is great and news reports say prices start at \$249,999 for 300 square feet.

Despite the smaller price tag, I do have some reservations.

In the ads for these minuscule units, condo living looks so hip and fun. But in reality the big banks are said to be wary of giving mortgages

for this unproven new trend. And the old rental apartment I currently share with my common-law partner is more than double the size of a micro condo. I worry we'd find living in a unit with a Murphy bed would seriously test our patience with each other.

So I, along with many other Millennials looking to buy their first place, am patiently waiting for the

Micro condos at a glance

- For many young, hip urbanites, the appeal of micro condos is that they are highly polished, modern spaces that come with innovative and trendy space-saving amenities.
- The concept of micro condos may be new to Canada, but in densely populated cities such as Paris, Tokyo and Hong Kong, they have been a way of life for generations.
- There are nearly 3,000 micro condo units under construction in Toronto that are slated to be completed this year.
- In Vancouver, city bylaws dictate that condo units can be no smaller than 398 square feet, but one development is proposing "nanosuites" that would measure 200 square feet.

real estate bubble to finally burst. If that doesn't happen soon, perhaps I'll end up like those New Yorkers I used to mock smugly, and buy my very own tiny box in the sky.

Melissa Dunne is a freelance writer based in Toronto.

Metro asked those in the know: What's your take on micro condos?

Realtor



The banks are not lending on these units, so right now we can't really tell if they are going to take off or not. Micros offer living space in the very good locations ... I've seen the average size of a condo come down significantly in the last 20 years, and I think this will become a trend that lasts. Once the banks gain confidence in micro condos, first-time buyers will see them as viable options. Don't forget, the banks were skeptical about lending on condos when they first made an appearance 50 years ago, and look at them now!

Sandra Rinomato, broker/owner of Sandra Rinomato Realty, a brokerage in Toronto.

Planner



The uptake of micro condos will be successful only in exceptionally strong markets — Vancouver, Toronto, San Francisco, Boston, N.Y.C., London. From a planner's perspective, if designed thoughtfully and close to local social life and shops, these are an affordable, funky option for 20-something singles and couples. Not so for most households with kids. Over time, the real estate market will decide whether these will hold their value.

Linda Allen, community planner and managing partner at CitySpaces in Vancouver.

Micro condo dweller



Absolutely I'd buy a micro condo. It works for my lifestyle right now. In many cases there will be many people transitioning to this lifestyle ... I don't have a car ... There are four coffee shops right outside my door that aren't Starbucks. Your neighbourhood becomes your living room ... Canada as a country will become more urbanized and we'll have to accommodate that. People will be living smaller. I think there definitely is a future in micro condos.

Samuel Baron has been renting a 248-square-foot micro suite in Vancouver for just over two years.

Researcher



Small units play a big role in today's condo market. For buyers and renters, they provide an option to save on costs. For investors, they offer above-average yields. For developers, they allow projects to easier achieve pre-construction sales, facilitating new development. Micro units certainly will be needed in the future to accommodate growth (in Toronto) and maintain affordability, but the next couple years may see a case of too much, too soon. Thousands of units under 500 square feet will be completed, while population growth for younger adults is starting slow. Adding to this is their difficulty in arranging mortgage financing."

Shaun Hildebrand, senior vice president at condo research firm Urbanation.

Investment specialist



I doubt it's a passing fad. It's simply what people can afford. There is a huge market for tiny condos because many people cannot afford larger. This is Toronto's weird form of "affordable" housing. It's not likely to get any better. But it does have the effect of high turnover of those units because as people's household size increases (marriage, babies, etc.), they have a hard time staying there.

John Andrew, director of Queen's University's Executive Seminars on Corporate and Investment Real Estate in Kingston, Ont.



Author of the Divergent trilogy, Veronica Roth, is writing a new book in "the vein of Star Wars." GETTY IMAGES

More from Roth on the way

Books. The author of the hugely successful Divergent trilogy is working on new series

Veronica Roth fans can start the countdown.

The Divergent author is set to write a new two-book series, HarperCollins Children's Books told The Associated Press. Currently, the books are untitled, with the first one expected in 2017 and the next in 2018.

Roth and her publisher offered few specifics, beyond saying the series is in the vein of Star Wars and will tell of a boy's "unlikely alliance" with an enemy.

"Both desperate to escape their oppressive lives, they help

each other attain what they most desire: for one, redemption, and the other, revenge," the publisher announced.

In a recent email to the AP, Roth wrote that the idea "started with a character. All the other elements — setting, world, even a substantial portion of the plot — came after." She added that while she had a "pretty detailed" outline for the new series, she was still in the early stages of writing.

"That's why I'm being so vague," she explained.

Divergent, along with Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games and John Green's books helped perpetuate the strong growth of young adult novels.

When it was released last year, the first Divergent movie, quickly earned more than \$100 million at the box office.

Three more movies are planned, starting with the March 20 release of Insurgent.

A Chicago resident, the 26-year-old Roth was still in college when she began Divergent, writing it in her pyjamas while on winter break from Northwestern University. She is now one of the world's most popular authors.

"I think I'd have to be a robot not to occasionally worry about expectations!" she wrote to the AP. "But mostly I try to trust my instincts. It helps that I'm really in love with this project — that makes it a joy to work on."

"I've been really taking my time with it," she said of the new series. "I've written huge sections a certain way only to cut them and start again. I've stepped away for a while, to work on other things, and then

Divergent



- **The book.** Divergent, a Dystopian trilogy, was completed in 2013 and sold more than 30-million copies.
- **The movie.** The first Divergent film, starring Shailene Woodley, came out a year ago.

come back when I have better perspective. I've been more patient with myself and with the story. I've expanded my collec-

tion of comfortable pants and snack foods. It's all working quite well so far."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Divergent fever? Feed your fandom...

If you've read Roth's books and your Hunger Games and Maze Runner books are long-devoured, here are a few recent and upcoming books that may satisfy your penchant for dystopian teen fiction **AFP**

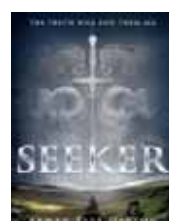
Red Queen by Victoria Aveyard

In a society where those in possession of superpowers are better positioned to lead their nations, a peasant girl with superpowers of her own threatens to upset the status quo and is quickly subsumed into the royal line, despite her secret commitment to revolution.



Seeker by Arwen Elyas Dayton

Quin Kincaid, a girl who has spent her life being trained for the role of a deadly assassin, is destined to fight beside her two closest companions, Shinobu and John. She takes her Oath and discovers that being a Seeker is not what she expected. Sony Pictures has optioned the story.



The Outliers by Kimberly McCreight

A group called the Outliers, claim to be able to harness "intuition" as a psychological weapon. The trilogy boasts a heroine with "the wit and wisdom of John Green's Hazel Grace, the ambition of Veronica Roth's Divergent." The book's film rights have been acquired by Lionsgate.



Kim McCreight



Dean Cain and Josh Duhamel star in *Battle Creek*, which airs Sundays on Global. CBS HANDOUT

The show that (almost) started with a bang

TV. Actors' near-collision pre-shooting reflects future clash of characters in *Creek*

RICHARD CROUSE
scene@metronews.ca

Josh Duhamel and Dean Cain had never met before starting work on the new police dramedy *Battle Creek*.

"I was actually driving onto the lot in Manhattan Beach for a fitting," says Cain, the actor known for his roles on *Oz*, *30 Rock* and the Allstate Insurance commercials, "and I wasn't looking where I was going and literally, true story, almost ran Josh over. That was our first encounter."

Their jarring introduction could have been useful as they created their characters: a *Battle Creek*, Mich. cop and an FBI agent who butt heads

Under the radar

"They get a lot of crime you wouldn't expect in what seems to be a very all-American town."

Josh Duhamel
On *Battle Creek*, Michigan

on police procedure and everything else. But they decided not to be too method in their approach to the work.

"To me, that is a sign of insecurity in people who don't know what they are doing," says Winters.

Instead the pair did on-the-job research to get under the skin of their characters.

Duhamel spent time with *Battle Creek* cops, doing ride-alongs with their undercover officers, drug enforcement team and gang unit. "There is some real stuff happening in that town," he says. "Nobody would ever suspect, because it sits right in between Detroit and Chicago, but they

get a lot of riff-raff fleeing either city and hiding out there. They get a lot of crime you wouldn't expect in what seems to be a very all-American town."

Winters says "the best part of the ride-alongs is actually listening to the cops talk. They have their own language, their own rhythms in the way they talk to one each other. It's really fascinating. I don't think anyone has ever really captured it, to be honest with you."

"It truly is a whole different world. I really do think the relationship Josh and I have is pretty close, especially when we're driving down the street in the Suburban. A lot of those conversations are priceless. I think (Canadian series creator-writer) David Shore has a real ear for that."

On screen, the pair investigate a series of wild cases.

"The crimes we are investigating on the show you won't see anywhere else," says Duhamel.

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Karrueche Tran dumped Chris Brown on Twitter after finding out he has a nine-month-old daughter. ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Brown's baby drama too much for girlfriend

Surprise! Embattled singer Chris Brown is a dad. TMZ reports that Brown is the father to a nine-month-old girl with a former model identified only as Nia. There's no sign of legal trouble between the parents, and sources say they're on good terms and not romantically linked. Since it doesn't involve an ambulance dispatch or a court filing, I'm honestly scratching my head as to how TMZ found out about this.

While Brown is said to be "happy about being a father," the same can't be said for his on-again, off-again girlfriend, Karrueche Tran, who took to Twitter to officially dump him following the

The business of baby names

Maybe for his next child, Chris Brown might want to consider the services of a company that helps parents come up with unique monikers, à la Blue Ivy and North West.

- A Swiss company called Erfolgswelle vows to create a brand-new first name — for US\$31,000.
- CEO and owner Marc

Hauser said the process works similar to trademark naming with around 100 hours devoted to its creation and research.

- "I think it's very difficult to create a really fitting name, a name that fits to your family's background, to your cultural background," Hauser said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

news. "Listen. One can only take so much. The best of luck to Chris and

his family," she wrote. "No baby drama for me." Good thinking.

Rogen's pot proclivities push Pascal's patience

Amy Pascal must seriously be losing patience with Seth Rogen at this point. After that whole business with The Interview and the hacking and her losing her job and all, he's now inadvertently making it impossible for Pascal to move into her new office on the Sony lot.

According to the



Hollywood Reporter, Pascal is set to make a home for her new Sony-financed production company in the offices previously occupied by Rogen and writing partner Evan Goldberg, only the lingering stench of marijuana is so strong, it has seeped into the flooring and is prompting a full paint job. Seriously, Seth, you've never heard of a vaporizer?

Hilton pleads guilty to assault

Some trouble you can't just buy your way out of. Conrad Hilton — 21-year-old hotel-chain heir and younger brother of Paris — has agreed to plead guilty to an assault charge from his infamous tirade during a flight from London to L.A. last year, and he could be looking at up to six months in prison and a \$5,000 fine. Hilton's attorney, Robert Shapiro, said previously that Hilton's behaviour may have been "the effects of a sleeping pill" or some similar circumstance. According to an FBI affidavit, Hilton acknow-



Conrad Hilton and Kathy Hilton in 2008 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ledged calling other passengers "peasants" and said he would have killed one flight attendant if another passenger had not calmed him during the 10-hour flight July 31. Hilton ignored instruc-

tions to keep his seatbelt on and paced in the aisle as the aircraft took off. When told to sit, he launched into a series of tirades that had some children in tears. He threatened to kill several flight attendants and a co-pilot and get them fired, the affidavit said. "I could get you all fired in five minutes," Hilton said in one of the document's quotes that didn't include an expletive. **WITH FILES FROM CP**

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A Bowie boom in fashion

Style. The runways are awash with references to the flamboyant glam-rock inspired fashions of the 1970s

Designers in Paris, London, New York and Milan have been sampling some of David Bowie's most iconic gender-less looks of late: from jumpsuits to Lurex, fantastically wide lapels, snazzy sequins, and mohawks.

Saint Laurent head designer Hedi Slimane, a long-standing Bowie fan, launched the trend seasons ago, and then last year Raf Simons kickstarted the Bowie revival when he unveiled his Spring 2015 Haute Couture collection for Christian Dior.

The Dior runway was replete with all-over sequined



onesies fit for Ziggy Stardust and outfits in psychedelic prints that would be at home



Gucci models channelled an androgynous, '70s pretty-boy look while sequined onesies were seen at Christian Dior. GETTY IMAGES AND AFP



Lyrics

"A small Jean Genie snuck off to the city. Strung out on lasers and slash-back blazers."

The Jean Genie as written by David Bowie

on any of Bowie's arty album sleeves.

At the Vivienne Westwood catwalk in London last month, models sported bright Bowie-style furry mohawks, while face paint was a key beauty look at both Westwood's show and that of British designer Gareth Pugh.

At Milan Fashion Week, Alessandro Michele channelled the androgynous '70s pretty-boy look as he sent male and female models down the catwalk for his debut F/W 15-16 collection for Gucci.

Selfridges of London is launching its in-store Agender project this month (launching online on March 12), which will feature unisex clothing, a gender-less window display, and art pieces that examine the concept of gender-neutral fashion.

This week, as the fourth and final leg of ready-to-wear week arrives in Paris, followers of the star's exuberant style (and those fortunate enough to be in France) have been able to enjoy a Bowie fashion fest off the catwalk at the David Bowie Is exhibition at the cool new Philharmonie de Paris music complex. AFP



Bowie-style mohawks and face paint were key runway beauty looks at recent fashion shows in London. IAN GAVAN/GETTY IMAGES

Trends Report online

Many top designers from Gucci to Dsquared2 paired their Milan Fashion Week collections with furry footwear. Go online to Trends Report and let us know what you think.

• **Online.** metronews.ca/trends-report

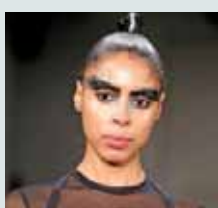
• **Follow Irene** on Twitter @MetrolreneK and Instagram @kuanirene

• **Photo gallery.** Model at Gucci runway show in Milan. (Getty Images)



Beauty without boundaries

Transgender models have taken the fashion world by storm, and more and more are appearing in high fashion magazines and on the runway **METRO NEW YORK**



Gisele Xtravaganza

Gisele Xtravaganza became the latest transgender model to grace the catwalks of New York Fashion Week.



Geena Rocero

After her brave coming out, Rocero walked the runway for Carmen Marc Valvo's Spring 2015 collection and created an organization called Gender Proud.



Andreja Pejic

Andreja Pejic isn't a newcomer to the fashion industry, but she changed her name to Andreja last year after completing her sex reassignment surgery.



Lea T

The Brazil-born beauty caught the eye of Givenchy designer Riccardo Tisci in 2010 and has served as his muse ever since. Lea T is also the face of Redken.

3
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Make your small space look bigger

Feeling cramped in your small space and need to redecorate? Here are five small-space decorating tricks you can use to make your place seem larger



DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

1. Keep colours and tones similar

Decorating with all light, all medium or all dark tones creates a visual flow that allows the eye to roam, giving the sense of a larger space. Keeping every decorating element similar will make your space feel much larger. Note: this is the trick designers use to make those tiny model suites feel larger.



ALL PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

2. Go vertical

Drapery panels, stacking art vertically on the walls, floor lamps, an étagère and even tall plants help to draw the eye upwards which is as important as guiding the eye around a room. Vittsjo Metal and Glass Étagère, \$50, Ikea.com



3. Add some sheen

Reflective surfaces like shiny countertops, stainless steel appliances, glass coffee tables and glossy paint will reflect light around the room. Dana Acrylic Writing Desk, \$2,000, Horchow.com

4. Allow one focal point per room

Best areas to zero in on: head of bed, bathroom mirror, television or console table in foyer. Have a boring living room? Try adding a double-duty fireplace/television stand as an attractive and useful focal point. Muskoka Durant Electric Media Mantel, \$930, Lowes.ca



5. Furnishings should do double-duty

Any investment furniture piece should provide at least two services, like a console table that acts as a desk, an ottoman with storage space, or a comfy dining chair that can be used as additional seating. A bed with built-in drawers helps to eliminate the need for a dresser. Universal's Spencer Storage Bed, \$2,200, TheBay.com



Home Matters

Looking for skilled professionals to help your home? Does it need a little TLC? Time to tackle that project in your house that has been bugging you for too long but you're not sure where to go for help? Look no further! Below is a list of local qualified outlets looking to help you out.



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Dinner. Braised Lamb Shanks with Poblano Peppers and Pinto Beans combines two cultures

Cookbook of the Week

More to Quebec than Poutine



The culinary treasure that is Quebec isn't as celebrated as it should be, and Julian Armstrong is out to change that with her book *Made in Quebec*.

Armstrong, a longtime food writer, has spent her career documenting the Quebecois food scene. The book is the result of those years and features stories of restaurateurs, farmers, artisanal cheese and bread makers, home cooks and more.

Among recipes included in *Made in Quebec* are Spiced Pork Spread, Roasted Vegetable Quiche, Skirt Steak with Gorgonzola Sauce, Roast Beef with Gravy and Chocolate Cranberry Cookies. **METRO**

"Quebec French cuisine 'with a Latin accent' is the specialty of Montreal chef David Ferguson, Ontario-raised and a graduate of the Stratford Chefs School," writes Julian Armstrong in *Made in Quebec*.

"Faithful to French culinary techniques at his midtown bistro, Restaurant Gus, David also adds flavours learned on his cooking sojourns in Mexico and New Mexico."

This Braised Lamb Shanks with Poblano Peppers and Pinto Beans recipe perfectly embodies that philosophy.

1. Preheat the oven to 300 F (150 C).

2. Finely chop 1 of the onions. In a 4-quart (4 L) heavy, stovetop-safe casserole dish with a lid, heat 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of the oil over medium-high heat and brown lamb on all sides. Remove to a plate. Reduce heat to medium and, in the same casserole dish, sauté carrot, chopped onion, garlic, and leek just until golden, about 5 minutes.

3. Add 1/2 cup (125 ml) of

the cold water to the pan and scrape up any brown bits. Return lamb to the casserole dish and add 5 cups (1.25 ml) cold water or enough to cover. Add thyme and ancho pepper. Bring mixture to a boil, then cover, transfer to the oven and roast for 1 hour and 45 minutes, until lamb is tender.

4. Remove lamb to a plate. Season the cooking liquid with salt and pepper. Discard ancho pepper. Simmer cooking liquid until it is reduced to about 3 cups (750 ml).

5. Meanwhile, cut remaining onion in half vertically, then slice finely. In a heavy frying pan, heat remaining 1 tablespoon (15 ml) oil over medium-high heat and cook onion until caramelized.

6. Return lamb to casserole dish. Add beans, tomatoes, caramelized onion, and poblano pepper. Reheat mixture and serve on deep, warmed serving plates.

RECIPES FROM MADE IN QUEBEC: A CULINARY JOURNEY BY JULIAN ARMSTRONG ©2014. PUBLISHED BY HARPERCOLLINS CANADA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Ingredients

- 2 large onions
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) olive oil
- 4 lamb shanks
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 leek, white part only, chopped
- 5 1/2 cups (1.375 l) cold water
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) finely chopped fresh thyme or rosemary
- 1/2 ancho pepper, rehydrated
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 can (19 oz/540 ml) beans, preferably pinto or red kidney, drained and rinsed
- 4 Roma tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped, or 2 cups (500 ml) canned Italian tomatoes
- 1 poblano pepper, grilled, peeled, seeded, and cut in strips



This recipe serves four. RYAN SZULC

Smoked Salmon Tartare

1. Using a sharp knife, chop salmon finely. In a bowl, place salmon, dill, mandarins, lemon juice, capers, and oil. Mix and season with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate 2 hours.

2. Tartare may be spooned

onto 4 serving plates or packed into 4 moulds or ramekins (1/2 cup/125 ml each), then unmoulded onto the plates.

3. Trim plates with lemons and capers. Serve with baguette slices, toasted until crisp.

Ingredients

- 12 slices (250 g) cold-smoked salmon
- 2 sprigs fresh dill, chopped
- 2 peeled mandarin oranges or clementines, pith removed, in segments and chopped
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) capers, rinsed and patted dry
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Lemon quarters
- Capers
- Baguette, to serve



This recipe serves four. RYAN SZULC

For your phone

Williams-Sonoma Recipe Of The Day (iPad; 1st month free/subscription)

Shopping lists, timers and a calendar are useful, but



MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

more photos and detailed cooking instructions would help make this daily recipe subscription service worth buying after the first free month.



Not-so-fun facts about the common cold

Achoo! Did you know there are more than 100 viruses that cause the pesky sickness?

JACQUELINE KOVACS

For Metro

Do you feel like that annoying cold just keeps coming back? It's more likely that you are just getting new ones. According to the Mayo Clinic, there are more than 100 viruses that cause the common cold — and any combination of the accompanying runny nose, watery eyes, sneezing, coughing, sore throat and congestion.

That's just one not-so-fun fact about the common cold and flu. Read on for more.

The most common

And the winner is — the rhinovirus! It's the most common strain of cold people catch. It's to blame for your nose running like a tap. And given how versatile this virus is, you can eas-

ily catch one after another.

So much for the man cold

Guys may gripe more about their nagging coughs and congestion, but, on average, women get more colds than men. It is thought that this is because women tend to have more contact with children — who are total virus magnets — than men do.

Talk about staying power

Flu viruses can linger for up to two days on non-porous, hard surfaces and a full 12 hours on soft ones. At human body temperature, flu viruses can stay infectious for about a week. At the freezing point, they can stay infectious for more than 30 days and, below freezing, they can last indefinitely.

Your sneeze is loaded

Sneezing into a tissue or your elbow is more than just good manners — it's a major preventative action. A sneeze leaves your body at about 90 miles per hour, bringing with it virus-laden droplets that can reach people within 30



Share statistics instead of the virus. A sneeze projects virus-laden droplets within a 30-foot radius, so sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. SHUTTERSTOCK

feet of you. And, yes, sneezing on someone is a very effective way of giving them your cold.

It's in the stars

Why do we call that annual scourge "influenza?" It comes

from the Italian word influenza. Back in the day, it seems people blamed the influence

of the moon, stars and planets for the flu's nasty and widespread influence.



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PHC-13942

NBA

LeBron, Cavaliers power past Raps

Jonas Valanciunas scored 26 points and grabbed 11 rebounds but it wasn't enough to lift the Raptors past the Cleveland Cavaliers in a 120-112 loss Wednesday night.

LeBron James had 29 points and 14 assists for the Cavs (39-24).

DeMar DeRozan scored 25 points, while Lou Williams had 21 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter for the Raptors (38-23), who rested all-star guard Kyle Lowry for the third straight game.

Kyrie Irving added 26 points for Cleveland.

The Raptors, who were coming off a 114-103 win at Philadelphia on Monday, trailed by as many as 19 points in the third quarter, but took a 93-91 lead with just under four minutes remaining when Williams drilled a three-pointer.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

World Cup of Hockey

Sportsnet and TVA to broadcast tourney in Canada

Sportsnet and TVA are staying with the NHL to broadcast the 2016 World Cup of Hockey in Canada.

The NHL and NHL Players' Association on Wednesday announced that league partners Sportsnet and TVA were awarded Canadian media rights to the upcoming tournament, again beating out TSN and RDS. The 2016 World Cup of Hockey, a joint venture of the NHL and NHLPA, will take place Sept. 17 to Oct. 16 at Toronto's Air Canada Centre. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**



The Senators' Bobby Ryan, left, celebrates scoring a goal with Alex Chiasson in Winnipeg on Wednesday night. JOHN WOODS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hammond solid for another win in goal

NHL. Sens goalie makes 35 saves against Jets to improve to 6-0-1

Rookie goaltender Andrew Hammond made 35 saves and Kyle Turris had a goal and assist as the Ottawa Senators upset the Winnipeg Jets 3-1 on Wednesday.

Bobby Ryan and Erik Condra also found the back of the net for Ottawa (28-23-11), which was coming off a 3-2

On Wednesday

3

Senators

1

Jets

shootout loss the night before in Minnesota.

The Senators are now 6-0-1 in their last seven games and battling for a playoff spot. Their 67 points puts them

four points out of a wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference.

Michael Frolik was the only Winnipeg player to beat Hammond early in the third period after the Sens had mounted a 3-0 lead.

Hammond, who is 6-0-1 since his first start Feb. 18, was starting his seventh straight game because Craig Anderson is still nursing a hand injury.

Michael Hutchinson got the nod for his fifth straight start for Winnipeg (32-21-12),

but was replaced by Ondrej Pavelec with 8:06 left in the second period after Condra's goal made it 3-0 for the Sens.

Hutchinson had stopped 14 of the 17 shots he faced. Pavelec only had to stop three shots in relief.

Winnipeg defenceman Dustin Byfuglien also left the ice after Condra's goal and didn't return because of what the team called an upper-body injury. He appeared to be favouring his right arm during Condra's scoring play.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jays' Stroman at ease in second go-around



Pitcher Marcus Stroman went 11-6 in his rookie season last year. RICK MADONIK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

With six pitches in his repertoire including a newly minted sinker, Marcus Stroman has plenty of reasons to smile.

And with a year in the major leagues under his belt, the 23-year-old right-hander is finally able to be himself in the Blue Jays clubhouse.

"Last year being a young guy coming into your first spring training, you can't really be yourself," he said. "And I'm pretty flashy, I talk a lot. This year I'm able to do that."

Stroman threw all six pitches — four-seam fastball,

Game highlights

Dioner Navarro, Kevin Pillar, Ramon Santiago and Matt Hague drove in runs in Toronto's 4-1 win over Pittsburgh on Wednesday.

- Pillar made a diving catch.

- Caleb Gindl recorded a triple in the seventh when two Pirates collided in the outfield.

- The Jays outthit the Pirates 6-4.

two-seam fastball (sinker), slider, curve ball, cutter and change-up — in his 1-2/3 innings Wednesday afternoon in a 4-1 Toronto win over the

Pittsburgh Pirates. He faced seven hitters, giving up one unearned run on two hits. He also had one strikeout.

As a rookie last season,

Stroman went 11-6 with a 3.65 earned-run average and 111 strikeouts in 130-2/3 innings.

"I expect him to have a big year," manager John Gibbons said. "He's that good. And he's that confident."

Stroman says last spring training he was so worried about making the team that it affected his performance.

"I feel a lot different, I feel much more relaxed," he said of his state of mind this spring.

"I'm relaxed, I'm motivated, I'm ready to go."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hazard tightens Chelsea's grip at top

EPL roundup. Blues see off West Ham and City beat Leicester as all of top five win

Chelsea came through one of the toughest tests of its Premier League run-in on Wednesday, beating West Ham 1-0 away to maintain a five-point lead on a night when all of the teams in top five won.

Eden Hazard headed in Chelsea's first-half winner at Upton Park, as the leaders rode their luck to stay on course for a second trophy this season to go alongside the League Cup they captured on Sunday.

"My team were brothers on the pitch and that is important if you are to win the most difficult league in the world," Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho said. Second-place Manchester City stayed in touch with Chelsea by beating Leicester 2-0, although goals by David Silva

Race for the top four

	W-D-L	Pts
Chelsea	19-6-2	63
Man. City	17-7-4	58
Arsenal	16-6-6	54
Man. Utd	15-8-5	53
Liverpool	15-6-7	51
S.Hampton	15-4-9	49
Tottenham	14-5-8	47
Stoke City	12-6-10	42

and James Milner masked an unimpressive display by the champions without dropped captain Vincent Kompany. Chelsea has a game in hand.

Behind the top two, the race for Champions League qualification remains tight after wins for Arsenal, Manchester United and Liverpool, as well as seventh-place Tottenham.

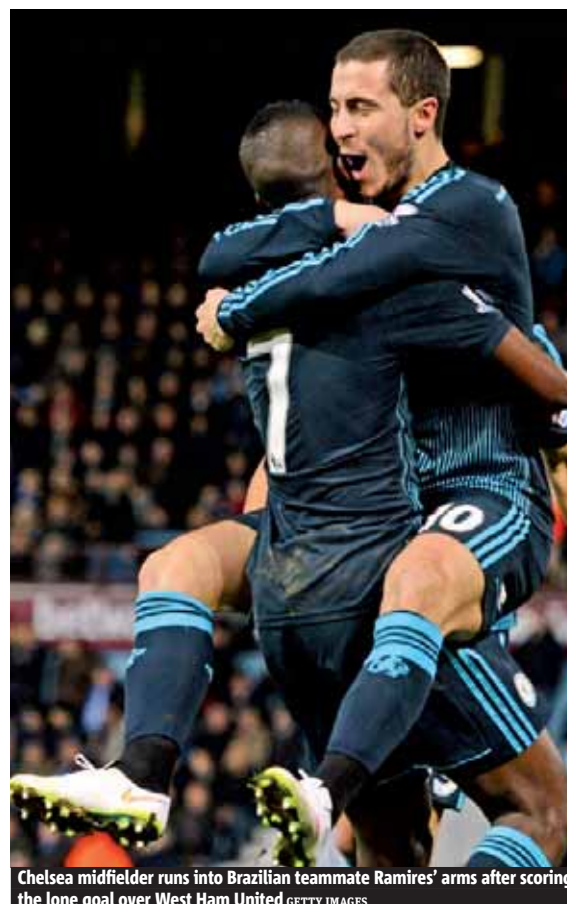
United left it late against Newcastle as Ashley Young capitalized on goalkeeper Tim Krul's error to score an 89th-minute goal in a 1-0 win. The game was marred by an angry

exchange between Newcastle's Papiss Cisse and United's Jonny Evans during which the players appeared to spit at each other.

United stayed a point behind third-place Arsenal, which beat Queens Park Rangers 2-1 through goals by Olivier Giroud and Alexis Sanchez. Liverpool was comfortable in beating Burnley 2-0 at Anfield through goals by Jordan Henderson and Daniel Sturridge to stay unbeaten since December — a run of 12 games — and within two points of United ahead of their meeting on March 22.

Spurs' 3-2 win over Swansea was overshadowed by early drama when Swansea striker Bafetimbi Gomis collapsed to the ground and required a lengthy period of treatment.

He was later said to be in a stable condition. Elsewhere, Everton's woes continued with a 2-0 loss at Stoke, which climbed to eighth after a third straight win. Everton is winless in five matches and slipping down table. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**



Chelsea midfielder runs into Brazilian teammate Ramires' arms after scoring the lone goal over West Ham United **GETTY IMAGES**

Around Europe

- **In Spain.** Two goals by Neymar and one from Luis Suarez gave Barcelona a 3-1 victory over 10-man Villarreal on Wednesday and a place in the final of the Copa del Rey. Barcelona advanced 6-2 on aggregate after winning the first leg by the same scoreline.
- **In Germany.** Holder Bayern Munich cruised into the quarterfinals of the German Cup by beating second-division Eintracht Braunschweig 2-0 on Wednesday. David Alaba and Mario Goetze scored for the winners, who dominated the match against a well-organized Braunschweig.
- **In Italy.** Defending champion Napoli drew 1-1 at Lazio in the first leg of their Italian Cup semifinal on Wednesday.
- **In France.** Paris Saint-Germain remains on course for a domestic treble after beating Monaco 2-0 to reach the French Cup semifinals on Wednesday.

MLB

A-Rod back after drug suspension

Alex Rodriguez returned to the New York Yankees after an absence of more than 17 months, lining a single into short left field in his first at-bat and going 1 for 2 with a walk in a 3-1 spring-training loss to the Philadelphia Phillies on Wednesday.

He was greeted by a 10-second mix of boos and cheers from the crowd of 9,673 as he stepped into the batter's box for his first game following a one-year drug suspension. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

NBA

Allen to remain free agent, for now

Ray Allen might return to the NBA — just not this season. The league's all-time leading 3-point shooter who played for two NBA championship clubs announced Wednesday that he decided not to sign with any franchise for the remainder of this season, although he left the door open for a possible return in 2015-16. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Nate Jackson. Former Bronco believes NFL will relax views on pot

Former Broncos tight end Nate Jackson says he believes the NFL will have no choice but to remove marijuana from its lists of banned substances in the near future.

Speaking at a marijuana business conference, Jackson called on the league to allow medical marijuana as a means to help players deal with the physical and psychological pain and head injuries inherent to their profession. Jackson said he avoided opiate painkillers as much as he could during his six-year career from 2003-08.

Instead, he self-medicated with marijuana so that he wouldn't retire addicted to prescription drugs like so many of his contemporaries, he said.

"It kept my brain clean," Jackson said Wednesday during the Cannabis Business Executives Breakfast that kicked off a three-day conference titled Sports, Meds and Money.

"I feel like I exited the game with my mind intact. And I credit that to marijuana in a lot of ways and not getting hooked on these pain pills that are recklessly



Nate Jackson **GETTY IMAGES**

distributed in the league when a guy gets an injury," Jackson said.

He said he believes most NFL players use marijuana — they're only tested for street drugs once a year whereas random tests for steroids are conducted year-round — and that the league knows this.

"They're aware that probably over half of their players smoke weed," Jackson said. "Marijuana is not a problem in their lives." The real danger is that they're "smashing their skulls over and over and over again," he added. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries

March 21 - April 20

Today's full moon suggests you won't be thinking straight, especially about matters related to your work and wellbeing. Don't take doubts too seriously.

♉ Taurus

April 21 - May 21

Chances are you will totally and utterly disagree with the advice you are given today. Maybe it is a load of nonsense — but what if it isn't?

♊ Gemini

May 22 - June 21

The planets warn you are expecting too much of yourself and must adjust your ambitions to a more practical level. Don't get uptight if a friend tells you something you don't want to hear.

♋ Cancer

June 22 - July 23

Don't waste precious time and energy on petty arguments today because you should be channeling everything you have got in productive directions.

♌ Leo

July 24 - Aug. 23

Today's full moon suggests you may have to cut back financially, most likely because you have bitten off more than you can chew.

♍ Virgo

Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

Stick with the facts today. The planets warn if you embellish the truth in any way, you will be found out.

♎ Libra

Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

Try not to provoke any arguments or showdowns today, because while the moon is full you are unlikely to be on the winning side.

♏ Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

Something you have always taken for granted will be held up to the light of the full moon and shown to be less substantial than you imagined.

♐ Sagittarius

Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

Listen to what others have to tell you today but don't think you are obliged to do what they suggest. You are advised to hold off making a major move while the moon is full.

♑ Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

You will find it hard to make up your mind as to what it is you should be doing today. The planets indicate there is no need to rush.

♒ Aquarius

Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

You may have some amazing ideas running through your head at the moment but don't be too eager to do anything with them.

♓ Pisces

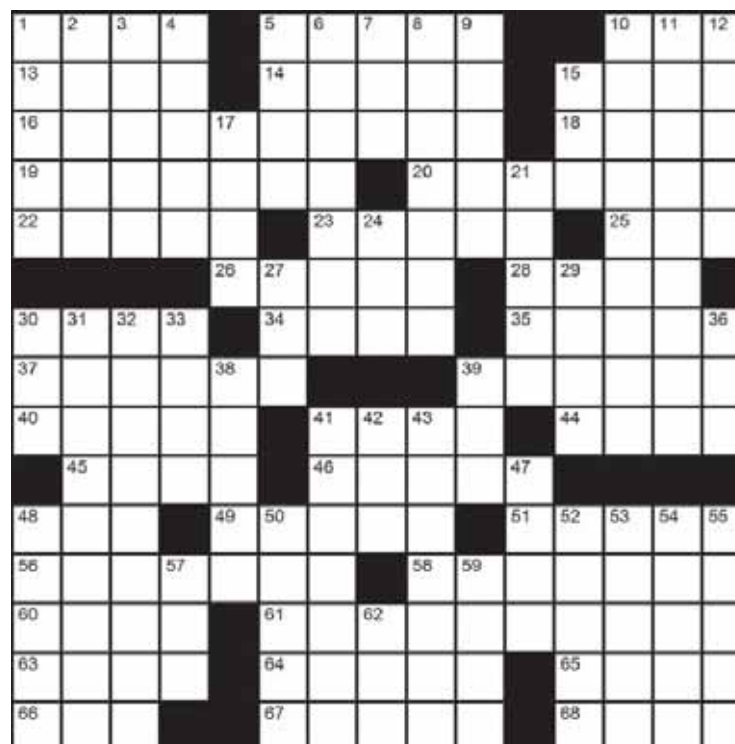
Feb. 20 - March 20

You have big plans, but have you thought them through properly? Today's full moon in your opposite sign suggests you may have missed something of importance.

Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan

Across

1. Spell-starting sound
5. Culinary figures
10. 'The Minister of Everything': Politician/businessman Mr. Howe, et al. (b.1886 - d.1960)
13. It's what's 'proper' in grammar class
14. "___ en Rose" by Edith Piaf
15. Go to buy things
16. Kinross = Canadian ___ company
18. Enamored
19. Sporting taboo, ___ use
20. Pointer Sisters hit: "___ Dance"
22. Flung
23. Custom-___ homes
25. Brunch offering
26. Actor, ___ William Scott
28. Footnote abbr.
30. Secretary's 'swift', shortly
34. Excited
35. More slack
37. Height measurement units
39. Non-laced running shoes fastener
40. Erin of "Happy Days"
41. "My Friend ___" ('50s sitcom)
44. Upcoming annual film/music/interactive festival in Austin, Texas
45. Exhausted



46. Mike of "Shrek the Third" (2007)
48. Egyptian cobra
49. Hiked, as prices
51. Jeweller's measurement, variantly
56. Even less sincere
58. Mimic
60. Prince Charles' sport

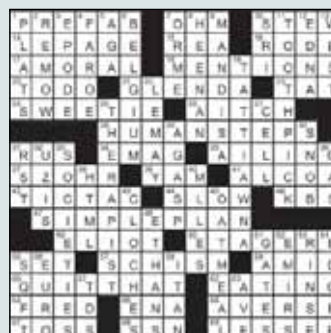
61. Newfoundland body of water, ___ Bay
63. Petals-not-pearls pieces
64. Tweety-like
65. Fails to be
66. Winding shape
67. Toronto-headquartered fashion company, ___ Bella

- (See #6-Down for more!)
68. Spelled-out marks
1. Uneasy feeling
2. County fair stall
3. Pencil case item
4. Canadian defence-man Mr. Benoit on the Buffalo Sabres

5. Old Rome's 152
6. Vegan ___ (Main product by #67-Across)
7. Midianite royal
8. Caterpillar equipment dealer/support company based in Edmonton, ___ (Canada)

9. Jason of "How I Met Your Mother"
10. "Boom Clap" songstress: 2 wds.
11. Meaning-well folks
12. Big name in shapewear
15. Army gig, briefly
17. Cuts the blades
21. Handy
24. 108-card game
27. '___' in Embrun
29. Dances for Cinderella, in Paris
30. Toothpaste brand
31. Trekking-in-white-fluff gear
32. The Parthenon is located on the what in Athens?
33. Racehorse flick, "___ Lap" (1983)
36. Theatre ticket detail
38. Tedium
39. Alternate spelling, for short
41. Make better
42. Cereal grass
43. Thorough patient examination
47. Jump rope
48. Fruit selection
50. Butter ___ (Flavour for ice cream)
52. House's accessed-by-ladder spot
53. Heighten
54. Make amends
55. Rustic shelters
57. Headshakes
59. Ms. Suvari
62. Nada

Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers



Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Yesterday's Sudoku



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